

ANSWER

TO AN LIBRARY

BOARD OF TRADE.

Elaborate Pamphlet,

ENTITLED,

West Indies

The IMPORTANCE *of the* SUGAR PLANTATIONS, &c.

Compos'd of many *Words*, much *Malice*,
very little *Argument*, and abundance of
False Reasoning.

S H E W I N G,

That the BILL now depending for Prohibiting
the Commerce carried on between our *Northern*
Colonies, and the Foreign *Sugar Plantations*,
tends to the impoverishing and ruin of those
Colonies; the weakening of the Power of the
English Empire in those Parts; and the Damage
and Loss of *Great Britain*; and would put
it in the power of our *Sugar Plantations* to
make us pay them what Price they please for
their Sugars.

In a LETTER to a Noble PEER.

M.DCC.XXXI.





A Short ANSWER to an Elaborate
PAMPHLET,

Entitled,

*The Importance of the Sugar
Plantations, &c.*

In a LETTER to a Noble Peer.

MY LORD,



AS there is a Bill now depending in your Lordship's House, and very sedulously solicited by the Agents of *Barbadoes*, for the Prohibiting a profitable Trade which has been of late years carried on between the *English* Colonies on the Continent of *America*, and the *French* and *Dutch* Sugar Plantations, for supplying them with Lumber and Horses; and a Pamphlet is publish'd to support so injurious an

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Attempt upon their Fellow-Subjects, with many Words, a very little Argument, and a great deal of false Reasoning and Misrepresentation : I will presume upon your Lordship's goodness to pardon me, in giving you the trouble of a few Remarks upon that Piece, in order to remove the wrong Impression which such artificial Compositions are apt to make upon Persons who have not been conversant in Affairs of that nature.

This Author sets out with telling us, (P. 4, and 5.) that *the Sugar Colonies are of the greatest Consequence to Great Britain, &c.* and I am so ready to admit their being of great Consequence, that I wish we had double the number : But then I must tell him, that of all those Colonies, *Barbadoes* is become the least profitable to us ; for it must be confessed that those are the most profitable that can afford us their Commodities cheapest ; but the *Barbadians* themselves make it an Argument for their Relief, that their Lands are worn out, and require a very great Charge in their Cultivation, so that they cannot afford their Sugars as cheap as others. And tho' I have heard of this Complaint for above Forty Years past, yet we see they go on and thrive still ; and they themselves acknowledge, that the Profits of their Molosses and Rum (Commodities which their Predecessors made no advantage of, and yet sold their Sugars for less

less than half the Price they have been at of late years) are become so considerable, as to support the Charge of the whole Plantation. That their Lands must needs be impoverish'd, is self-evident, and they have the least Reason of any People in the World to make that a Complaint, after they have for so long a Tract of Years continually reap'd such abundant Crops off of them, and have rais'd such vast Profits, that if they had been prudent and provident, would have enabled them to have settled ten times the compass of new Ground in some other place, to their own and the Nation's great Advantage; and they had the Islands of *St. Vincent* and *St. Lucia* near at hand, and very opportune, which they not only neglected, but hindred all they could from being settled, lest it might interfere with their Interest in their dear *Barbadoes*.

He tells us next, that the *Sugar Colonies bring a Profit and Advantage to Great Britain of a good 1,200,000 l. per Annum*; and thus he makes up the Account for us: *The Planters clear usually 850,000 l. which Sum, or much the greatest part of it, he says, is spent here by the Proprietors, who live in England, or else in Manufactures sent to the West-Indies, or to Guinea to purchase Negroes.* A notable stretch this! to persuade us that a great part of the Proprietors liv'd in *England*, tho' I believe he can

can hardly name us 20 Families; and then for the Manufactures us'd by them, the Custom-House Books will confute him that they don't take off one third part of that Sum. Then he tells us that *we gain 170,000 l. per Annum by the Freight*: As to the Sum it may possibly be so; but then the Nation cannot be said to get any thing by it, more than for that part of the Sugars which we re-export to Foreigners; for as to what we spend ourselves, the Transaction is only that the Consumer repays the Importer for the Freight, and nothing is thereby added to the National Wealth. Lastly he says, *we get little less than 200,000 l. more by the Duty, Commission, &c.* As to the Commission, I will admit that the whole of that Sum would amount to above 20,000 l. but then would he have us believe that all the Sugars we import are consign'd to Factors here for the proper Account of the Planters, and that our Merchants bring home none in return for the Cargoes they send out upon their own Accounts? for which methinks he might fairly have allow'd us one half at least; and then for the Duty, 'tis a Tax paid really by the Consumer, and no National Gain, nor are the Planters any way concern'd in it. And now what's become of this good 1,200,100 l. gain? I am sure it cannot be properly said that we gain any thing by what we spend at home, our real Gain arising
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only from what we export; and I am afraid that is now so dwindled away, as to reduce this mighty Sum to less than 100,000 *l. per Annum*; and surely 'tis a sign of a very bad Cause when Men are forc'd to strain their Invention to impose upon the World by such a way of Accounting, and such a sort of Arguing.

He says (*p. 6, and 7.*) Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, Pensilvania, New York, New Hampshire, and New Jersey, *have but little Trade with the Foreign Sugar Colonies, and are no Parties in opposing this Bill.* No wonder if they did not oppose it, when they had not the least Notice of so malicious a Design being carried on against them: But if the Gentlemen who solicit this Bill will be content to drop it for this Sessions of Parliament, I will submit to forfeit all my Credit in the World, if in the next, all these Colonies do not shew, by opposing it with all the Interest they are able to make, that they believe themselves to be very sensibly affected by this Bill, and that every one of them would be greatly injur'd thereby, if ever it should pass into a Law.

But he would have it, that New England and Rhode Island *are the only Colonies that oppose the Bill*; and he is pleas'd to represent them to be so inconsiderable, *as that the least Sugar Island was of ten times more Consequence to Great Britain, than both these put together*: he says, *their Imports*
scarce

scarce deserve that Name, and that their Exports consist in Hemp and Naval Stores unmanufactured, &c. Here indeed I was at a stand to conceive what he meant by talking of Hemp and Naval Stores as the Exports of *New England*, 'till I came to observe that he had inverted the words *Import* and *Export*, so that what he really intended was, that they exported little to us, and that what they imported from us, was chiefly Naval Stores. This I note only to shew how incorrect a Writer he is in this, as well as in many other places. He adds, that *they have little Occasion of our Manufactures, because they have Woollen, Linnen and other Manufactures of their own; and that for Silks, they have a cheap Method of being supply'd from the French.*

Now to answer all this Slander and Misrepresentation, I shall first observe, that the Accounts transmitted from the Custom-House shew, that the Value of the Manufactures we sent from hence to *New England* only in one Year, amounts to more than the one half of what was sent to all the Sugar Islands in the same Year; and as our Exports thither consist chiefly in *British* Manufactures, our Commerce with them will appear to be of much more consequence to this Kingdom, than that which for some years past we have held with the Sugar Colonies. For if, as he has granted, the *New Englanders* send us little
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of their own Product for our home Expence, they must pay us the Ballance in Money; whereas, on the other hand, if we spend the greatest part of the Sugar our selves which we bring from the Islands, and re-export little of it (as is really the case at present) 'tis apparent that we squander away our Estates in a Commodity which serves only to indulge our Luxury, and must lose proportionably in the Ballance of our Trade in general. What heed then is to be given to a Writer who has the Confidence to advance so extravagant an Assertion, as that the least Sugar Island was of more consequence to us than both those Colonies? He shews also the little regard he bears to Truth, when he affirms that the *New England* People have little occasion for our Manufactures, but can supply themselves with their own; whereas 'tis notorious that they buy of us to a very great value, and, excepting their making some sorts of Iron Ware, they have no Manufacturies of their own worthy our Notice. Nor is the insinuation of their being supplied with Silk from the *French* less disingenuous, for I am well assured that 'tis utterly false in fact; and therefore his charging them positively with it again in *p.* 32. is a great abuse. The wiper also he gives them for building Ships for themselves and for Foreigners, is methinks very weak: Have they not built many a good Ship for ourselves

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cheaper than we can build them here? And I think it so far from being a Crime to build for Foreigners (of which yet I believe there are very few Instances) that I wish they were more employ'd in that way; since the more Money they get by it, the more they will have to lay out with us. Have the *Dutch* ever thought it impolitic to build Ships for any Nation that would employ them?

But I should tire your Lordship if I were to trace this Gentleman thro' all the Steps of his loose way of arguing; the Specimen I have already shewn you of what arises out of four Pages only, may suffice to give you an Idea of the whole Performance: I shall therefore for the future pass by many things which I think deserve little notice, and make my Remarks as short as possible on some places which may seem more material; and so I come on to p. 9. where he pretends to *propose a Method to enable our Planters to supply foreign Markets as cheap as the French; and that is, by prohibiting the exportation of Horses, and Lumber, from our Colonies to theirs; and also the importation of all foreign Sugars, Rum, and Molasses into any of our Colonies; and this, he says, will effectually cramp and check the French in the Sugar Trade: and he would persuade us that this is as absolutely necessary as the prohibiting the carrying our Wooll to France.*

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Now if this were true, all his arguing upon these Topics would be very right; but if we shall find his Premises to be false, his Conclusions must needs be so too. First then, the *French* would not be disabled (as he says p. 11.) from rivalling us in the Sugar Trade, by our refusing to sell them Horses, and Lumber: For, notwithstanding he is so confidently avers (and takes a great deal of pains to prove, tho' all the while 'tis with no better Argument than begging the Question) that *they can't at all be supply'd with those Conveniencies from their own Settlements, or else that it would be attended with such Difficulties that would give us a Superiority over them*; it has yet been maintain'd by Persons well acquainted in those Parts, that they could and would supply themselves with a very little more difficulty from other Settlements in *America*; the Consequence of which would be, that the *French* would gain, and we should utterly lose the Navigation we now employ in that Business. But this is so vain a Suggestion, that I can't but wonder at his Presumption to impose upon us a Fallacy so easily to be discovered: For after all the great Stress they have laid upon this Article of Lumber, the chief Use it is put to in the Business of Sugar, is only for the making their Casks; which bears so small a proportion to the Price of the Sugar, that, as it has been clearly demonstrated in a

Letter publish'd in the *Whitehall Evening Post* of the 10th Instant, (which I would humbly recommend to your Lordship's perusal, since you may there find a more ample Differtation upon this whole Dispute) it would amount to but a poor two *per Cent.* (with about such another Pittance upon the Article of Horses) more than it now costs them, even tho' they were necessitated to import their Barrel-staves from *Europe*: A mighty Help indeed to give our Planters a superiority over their Rivals! and yet this Gentleman has the Assurance to insinuate, that these Prohibitions are as absolutely necessary as the prohibiting the carrying our Wooll to *France*; tho' I think he has brought this Comparison *mal a propos*; because it gives me the occasion to shew, that tho' the selling our Wooll to the *French* would be an apparent Disadvantage to us, since if we kept it from them, they could not rival us in our Woollen Manufactures; the only Reason whereof is, because without it they could not work up their own Wooll, nor could they procure any of the like quality from any other Country: Yet our selling them Horses, and Lumber, is as apparently advantageous to us, because they pay us for them, if not in Money, yet in what turns into Money at last, whereby so much is added to the Ballance of the National Trade, without any manner of detriment to ourselves, because they could certainly be
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supply'd from elfewhere, and would make never a pound of Sugar the lefs. And then, as the *French* permit their People to get all the Wooll they can from us, for the very fame Reason we ought to permit ours to get all the Moloffes they can from them; becaufe it enables our Subjects to carry on a very confiderable Manufactory of Rum, where-with they fupply our own Fisheries, and carry on a profitable Trade with the *Indians*: fo that, on the contrary, it would be a great Lofs to us, and an Advantage to the *French*, to prohibit the felling of their Moloffes to us, becaufe they might otherwife diftil it all into Rum themfelves, for which they would not want a vent, either by finding means (which we could not help) of ferving our Fisheries, or by fending it to *Holland*, and other parts in *Europe*. For, notwithstanding what has been fuggelted, that the Government in *France* would refrain them in favour of their Home-Brandies, it is not to be fuppos'd that they would put fuch a Hardship on the Iflanders, who are equally their own Subjects, and they might have vent enough for both Commodities: But if this were reasonable, we alfo ought to prohibit the Importation of Rum, to promote the Expence of our own Malt-Spirits; and that indeed might give our Sugar Planters fome caufe of Complaint.

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I can't forbear giving your Lordship one Instance more of this Gentleman's inconsiderate way of reasoning. He tells us, p. 16. that *if we allow the carrying of Lumber, it will not be possible, in so long a Coast of 7 or 800 Miles, where there are so many Bays, Creeks, and Rivers, and so few Officers, to prevent the running in of Sugar, Rum, and Molosses.* I would ask him then, Whether it will not be altogether as impossible to prevent their running out of Horses and Lumber?

He would persuade us, p. 17, and 18, that *Lumber was become so scarce, as that we might be like to want a supply for our own Islands.* Strange indeed, if in a woody Coast of 7 or 800 Miles (as he has told us) we should ever want Timber, when we find *Norway*, of far less extent, has held out to furnish great part of *Europe* for many Ages; would it not be more reasonable to suppose, that if it should be destroy'd in one place, we might find plenty in a thousand more? But he gives us an Instance, that at *Newberry* some Ships have gone away without being able to get their loading; but if I am rightly inform'd, this was but one Ship, which came at an improper Season, and would not stay 'till the Rivers were open which bring the Timber down from the Country.

He says, that the *Objection made by the Northern Colonies, that the Islands cannot supply*

supply them with a sufficient quantity of Rum, is groundless: And yet I believe they had some ground for that Objection, because they had found by experience that they never made so much as half the quantity that was used by them; but I am now fully convinced that they are able to serve them with all they want, tho' it were five times more: For in p. 19. he has unriddled the mystery, by quoting a Gentleman of Distinction who inform'd the Committee, that he himself makes now but 2000 Gallons of Rum in a Year, tho' he could make 20,000, if he had encouragement. But in my Opinion this Gentleman had distinguish'd himself much better, if he had, like an honest Witness, told the whole truth, and added; but that then indeed he must make so much the less Sugar. The matter is plain; the Rum is usually distill'd from the Molasses, which is the coarsest part of the Syrup which separates itself when the finer part kerns into Sugar, and was reckon'd as an Offal, whereof they formerly made little account, till they found the benefit of making Rum; and thus in the ordinary way they could not perhaps make near enough to serve the Continent: but if you'll give them encouragement, that is, let them have as it were the Monopoly of it, (and he tells us plainly, p. 20. what they aim at, which is to serve the whole Continent) and give them the opportunity of raising the price so high,

as that they may get more by their Rum than they can by their Sugar, they can distil as much of their Syrup as they please into Rum, and make the less of it into Sugar; the consequence whereof would be, that they could set what price they please upon both Commodities. Shall we then be so unwise as to suffer ourselves to be thus imposed upon (I will not say by all our Sugar-Plantations, but) by one little Island; or ought we not rather to shew some resentment at so injurious an Attempt? But he insinuates, (p. 21.) that *if the Islands could not supply them and the Fisheries with Rum* (which, by the way, he calls unwholesome if distil'd from foreign Molasse, as if our People could not distil as wholesome a Spirit out of the very same Material, whether it were of the *French* or *English* Production) *they might be supply'd with Malt-Spirits from Great-Britain*. Now I thought that Rum was always taken to be more wholesome than Malt-Spirits: And what would *Great-Britain* get by the Change? Cannot *New-England* and the rest of our Colonies on the Continent raise Barley enough; and is it to be thought that they would not employ their distilling Utensils in that way, if they were restrained from the other, and be able to sell their Malt-Spirits much cheaper than we can?

Next he falls foul upon the *New-Englanders*, (p. 22.) plays Sir *Josiah Child's*
Book

Book of Trade very hard upon them, and goes on to mortify them for several Pages following. I have as much Esteem for that Book as this Gentleman himself, and I acknowledge that there are many just and instructive Observations in it; but yet even Sir *Josiah* himself was as subject to Misinformations, Mistakes, and Partialities, as other Men, as I could shew in divers Places, and particularly in this Gentleman's first Quotation; where he says true indeed, that the Fishery (that is, the catching and drying the Fish) was carried on by the People settled in *New England*. But to say that *nothing of that Trade was left to the Old English Men, but the liberty of carrying now and then a Ship-loading of Fish to Bilboa, when their own New-English Ships were better employ'd*, is an Error; for I my self was conversant in Trade above 60 years past, and have seen many a Fish-ship discharg'd in the Ports of *Spain*, and believe I may affirm, that not one in twenty of the Ships or Cargoes were the Property of *New-Englishmen*; for I know we usually sent our Ships to *New-England* to load for our own Accounts. I could also except against much of what is said in the second Quotation, (*p. 26, to 30.*) tho' there are some things in it that may be worthy our regard; and shall only observe in general, that 'tis the *French*, and not the *New-Englanders*, that have been our most prejudicial Rivals in the Fishery of those Parts; and therefore I am humbly of the

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Opinion, that considering the present State of that Affair, instead of checking, we ought rather to give the *New-Englanders* all the Encouragement we can to go on with their Fisheries; for the convenience of their situation will always give them an Advantage over the *French*, and enable them to afford their Fish cheaper : and 'twill be much more our Advantage to have the Foreign Markets supply'd with Fish by our own Subjects, in what part soever of our Dominions they live, than by our Rivals the *French*; for by the latter we get nothing, whereas the former bring their Money to us for the Necessaries they must have from us, and contribute so much towards the Balance of our Trade. This I mean with respect to what Cargoes may be sent to Market on the *New-Englanders* own Account, tho' I know that formerly, and I believe 'tis so still, the much greatest part of the Fish we sent to the *European* Markets, was for the account of the *English* Merchants. But see with what Exaggerations he persecutes them yet further, (*p. 31.*) *The Sea cover'd with Ships either own'd or built by them; their Manufactures rivalling the best and principal of our own:* Strains so far beyond the very shadow of Truth, that they exceed even the bounds of Hyperbole. And yet for all this he would have them take him for their very good Friend; he tells them once and again that he has really a very great Regard for them, and is pleas'd to bestow his

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Advice (such as it is) upon them very freely : but for my part, after any man had treated me in so abusive and invidious a manner, I should think his Compliments look'd with a very ill grace, and should desire him to keep his Civilities to himself.

I cannot but take notice how this Gentleman treats the Subjects settled in the Northern Colonies, as if they were separated from the Body, and as if we had little or no interest in them ; whereas I think we ought to consider them all (as he would have us esteem the Sugar Colonies to be *p. 23.*) as flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, and to have the same regard to their thriving and prosperity as a good Mother has to all her Children ; for we may justly look upon them as contributing abundantly more to the strength and support of our Empire in those parts (and to our Riches too, 'till we can be enabled to export more Sugar) than all our Islands ; but he is pleas'd to note to us (*p. 34,* and *35.*) that *The profit they make by their Freights is gain'd only by themselves, and not by Great Britain ;* and that *The multitude of Seamen they employ may prove of fatal consequence to us, as being kept there, and not returning home.* But a person less prejudic'd would have consider'd that we are really benefited by the profits they make, because they lay out their Money with us ; and that they are so far from hurting us, by detaining our Seamen, that they do indeed breed up abundance

of as able Seamen of their own as perhaps any in the World, from which they afford very seasonable Recruits to our Men of War when they want them in those Parts.

Lastly, for a Corollary to his delusive Arguments he tells us, that *The Sugar Colonies are at present in a very bad and languishing condition: that their Duties are high, their Planters poor, their Soil worn out, and their Fortifications destroyed.* Which may be answered in a very few, but much truer words; that, in comparison with the Northern Colonies, (and I may say with *Great Britain* itself) they are in a very good and flourishing condition; that they pay no Duties at all, for their Product, because how high soever the Duties are laid, they are all paid in the price of the Commodity by the last Consumer; their Planters are rich, or at least they appear to be so by the figure they affect to make; their Soil is not so worn out but that it yields them a Product far more profitable than any other Lands in the *British* Dominions; and if their Fortifications are destroyed, they may be ashamed of their own neglect and improvidence, since a trifling abatement in their exorbitant Luxury would always enable them to provide largely for all publick Services.

And now, my Lord, I have done with my Remarks, tho' I could have taken notice of many things more which a Man of knowledge and integrity would have been ashamed to advance; and shall hasten to a Conclusion, by giving

giving you a short Idea of the true State of this controversy. The Sugar Planters began their improvements chiefly upon the Credit given them by the *English* Merchants, and paid their Creditors in Muscovado Sugar valued in *Barbadoes* at no more than 10 s. *per Cent.* for Money it might be bought for less, and at this price it continued for many years. When they had overcome the difficulty of clearing their Lands, and erecting their Sugar Works, their profits encreas'd vastly, and even exceeded some Silver Mines, and they fell into an excess of Luxury beyond compare. After this our other Islands came to be settled, which afforded us such quantities of Sugar, that we re-exported a great part to our Neighbours, and in great measure beat the *Portuguese* out of that trade; and thus indeed our Sugar Plantations became very profitable to us. But as of late years we have vastly encreas'd the home expence of this Commodity, so that we have little to spare for re-exportation, the Planters have taken the advantage to raise their price upon us by degrees even to more than double, and if they carry this Bill, will have it in their power to impose almost what price they please upon us. But we have yet two ways to remedy this evil; one is, by settling more Sugar Colonies, which the Government ought to have at heart, and to set about it with vigour: The other is, to give a liberty to import Muscovado Sugars, (paying the same Duty with our own) even from whence-

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foever we can get them cheapest; which is not thought an ill policy by other Nations, and which we our selves have sometimes done on other occasions, and never refuse it in the want of Corn. And this would immediately reduce our Planters to the necessity of lowering their prices and using us better, which we know they are well able to do without denying themselves in any thing, but what would be for their real good, a moderate abatement of their profusion: For we know that they are furnish'd with necessaries much cheaper than the *French*; and if their Predecessors were able to work themselves into Estates when they sold their Sugars for under 10^s *per Cent*. I can see no reason why the present Gentlemen should not content themselves with 15.

On the other hand, the Northern Colonies are an industrious People, who may well be said to earn their bread with the sweat of their brows, and will continue to be more profitable to us (as I think I have demonstrated before) than our Sugar Islands, 'till these last shall furnish us with commodities that we can re-export with profit: and as the former have fallen into a profitable way of Trade (and no way detrimental to Old *England*) with the *French* and *Dutch* Settlements in *America*; and also have establish'd a considerable Manufactory for Rum, and which is of great importance to the carrying on their Fisheries, they must needs look upon it as one of the greatest

greatest oppressions that ever was put upon an innocent and free People, if so many thousands should be turn'd out of their livelyhood, only to gratify the avaricious spirit of a few encroaching People, and therefore I hope this Bill will be better considered in your Lordship's House, and never suffer'd to pass; unless it be with a *Proviso*, That whenever the common Muscovado Sugar shall be sold in *Barbadoes* for above 15 s. *per Cent*, it shall and may be lawful for all and any of his Majesty's Subjects, to trade freely with any other Nation for the said Commodity, and to import it into any of His Majesty's Dominions. I most humbly beg your Lordship's Pardon for troubling you with so long an Epistle, and pray I may always have the honour to be

Your LORDSHIP's

Obedient Humble Servant.





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